

24 PAGES OF WINNING WHIST POINTERS

**1 2 5**  
**WHIST**  
**"DON'TS"**

APPLYING TO THE GAME AS PLAYED AT  
PUBLIC WHIST PARTIES.

BY  
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"PLAYING FOR AMUSEMENT."

"H, I play Whist only for amusement; I don't pretend to play according to the rules."

How often do we hear that gray-headed, antediluvian, threadbare pronouncement made by persons who, in all respects save Whist-playing, seem to be well-meaning, courteous and possessed of good common sense. Now it is certain that if these persons knew the real significance of the remark it would never be made. What it really means is nothing more nor less than just this: "I am sitting down to this game with the full knowledge that I am going to spoil the enjoyment of three other persons, but that does not disturb me in the least, for I expect to get some amusement out of it." ("Pembroke" says, concerning the "amusement" player: "In all well-regulated society, your aim should be the greatest happiness of the greatest number; and that number is notoriously number one.")

You think that this is a harsh statement of the case? Well, let's see. Let me try to make the matter plain by an illustration or two: We will suppose, for instance, that I know nothing whatever of dancing, only that it consists of moving your feet about in some prescribed form with which I am unacquainted, and circling around the room. Armed with this knowledge, I proceed to the ballroom, secure a partner, and begin to hop merrily around the room. I step on my partner's feet, tear her skirt, and bump her up against the other dancers, all with the utmost glee. If she ventures to remark that I have a very peculiar way of dancing, I nonchalantly reply, "Oh, I only dance for amusement; I don't pretend to dance according to the rules. Come on, I'm having lots of fun, aren't you?"

Or, again: Suppose that I, knowing nothing whatever of the piano, only that sounds are produced by striking the keys, sit down to the instrument some evening at a social gathering, and proceed to hammer away at the keys with my closed fists, using my elbows, knees and feet occasionally for the sake of variety. Suppose that, after the guests have enjoyed this for an hour or so, some supersensitive person suggests to me that my method of playing is not meeting with unmixed approbation. I am not only shocked, but deeply pained. "Why," I rejoin, "I play only for amusement; I don't pretend to play according to the rules."

Now does a light begin to shine on you, my dear well-meaning but unreflective "amusement" player? In neither of the instances cited above would I have struck a more deadly blow at

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[AUTHOR'S NOTE.—I may state that, while the principles enunciated in the following pages are in conformity with those of the correct or "scientific" game, yet in designating the proper card to be played in given cases, I have not used the technical and complicated system involved in the "conventional" or information-giving leads and plays of scientific Whist. It has been my endeavor merely to make suggestions that will enable the reader to play a fine game of Every-Day Whist—not to instruct him in the art of Scientific or "Book" Whist, which, however much it is to be regretted, has no place in the public Whist party of to-day.

WESTON P. TRUESDELL.]

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## BEFORE THE PLAY

- 1.—Don't pick up a card until the deal is finished.
- 2.—Don't look at the trump, when dealing, until it is turned.
- 3.—Don't fail to properly sort and arrange your cards, and to count them, before beginning to play.
- 4.—Don't fail to carefully note not only the trump card, but its denomination. If you will mentally name the trump card, thus: "The 8 of Diamonds is trump," you will find it a surprising help in remembering it.
- 5.—Don't forget that, while you may be told what suit is trump, in case you forget (which is inexcusable) you must not be told the denomination of the trump card. Hence it would seem wise to remember it yourself.

## WHEN FIRST IN LEAD AFTER THE DEAL

- 6.—Don't just simply lead the first Ace you see.
- 7.—Don't fail to examine your cards carefully before opening the hand.
- 8.—Don't forget that an unwise opening may cost you several tricks.
- 9.—Don't open with a short suit that you may have to trump, if you have a long suit and enough trumps to probably establish it.

10.—Don't try to establish a long, strong suit with only two or three trumps, unless you have good cards of re-entry in both of the remaining suits.

11.—Don't forget that in such a case it is better to weaken your opponents first by forcing them to trump your long suit once or twice, after which you may succeed in getting out their remaining trumps.

12.—Don't start out, when first leader after the deal, by leading a "sneak"—at least, don't do this oftener than about once in every fifty years. You needn't refrain on the ground of morality; it's bad play, that's all. (See The "Sneak" Lead, No. 59.)

13.—Don't forget that there is a **right** lead, and many **wrong** leads, in every hand that you pick up, no matter how poor it may be. Don't play "any old thing" when you have a poor hand, but try to make the best lead you can. It may save you tricks.

14.—Don't forget these pointers: If you have a long, strong suit and four or more trumps, don't lead the suit, but lead the trump. Trumps may also be led with only three, **provided** you hold Ace and King, and **good re-entry cards**. (See No. 75.) If you have a missing suit, don't lead trumps, even with a strong suit, **unless** your trumps are **all winning cards**. With small trumps you may do better by using them to trump in with, than by losing them to a stronger opponent in an attempt to establish your suit. In such a case, open your best suit. With a few small trumps and a weak hand all around, lead your shortest suit (but not a sneak), in the hope of getting in one or two of your little trumps. (See also Leads in General, page 8.)

#### PLAYING SECOND HAND

15.—Don't forget that playing the second hand is a far more important position than it is considered by the average player.

16.—Don't play a small card on a small card led, when you hold the King, Queen and small ones. You should play the King.

17.—Don't lead the suit back, if your King wins. The leader probably has the Ace, and may win with the Jack, when your Queen loses.

18.—Don't forget that the player at second hand should act as a protector of his partner, the player at fourth hand, whenever possible.

19.—Don't hesitate—when not intending to use your trumps



for the purpose of establishing a suit—to trump a doubtful card. If your partner should happen to hold the high card, **he can make it later on.**

20.—Don't forget to forget all about that ancient axiom, "second hand low"—except as a general principle with so many modifications and exceptions as to almost deprive it of the dignity of being a principle.

21.—Don't fail to trump a suit that your partner has already trumped, if you see that he has to use high trumps, while you can use small ones, and can neither discard to advantage nor use your trumps to establish a suit.

22.—Don't forget that, while it is theoretically up to your partner at fourth hand to take the trick on a small card led, it is your duty, not to blindly play "second hand low," but to stop and see if you cannot play a supporting card that may possibly protect his Ace or other high card.

23.—Don't play the small one on a small card led, when you hold Queen and one small, or Jack and one small, etc., or when you hold Queen, Jack and one small, etc. Supposing the leader to have led from the King, you may protect your partner's Ace, while even if third hand wins, you have lost nothing, for you could not have made your high card, anyway.

24.—Don't think that this plan is wrong because it may sometimes happen that when, with Queen and one small, you put up the Queen, third hand covers with the King and forces your partner's Ace, making your opponents' Jack good for the second round, which would have been won by your Queen if you had played the small one instead. Just keep tally, see how often it happens this way and how often the other way.

25.—Don't fail to cover **any** card led, when you have the card next above it and the card next below it. **Let this sink in!** Many an Ace has been forced, fourth hand, because the player at second hand made the blunder of playing **below** instead of **above** a small card led. With the 8 led before you, the 7 and the 9 in your hand are of equal value. What is the sense, then, of playing the 7, when the 9 may possibly save your partner's Ace? Yet this is constantly done by people who call themselves Whist players!

26.—Don't lead the Ace back after taking the first trick with a small card, **unless** you have so many that you are afraid to

risk a discard by one of your opponents. Suppose your 10, second hand, has won the first trick. Now if you lead the Ace, you establish the King, which is very likely in first player's hand. But if you keep away from that suit, you have the best of it, no matter how the play comes. If third hand leads it, you have the King at your mercy. If your partner or the original leader leads it, you can still keep your Ace and finesse a small card. In this way you will probably make three tricks in the suit, while if you lead out your Ace you will likely make only two.

27.—Don't fail to stop a trump lead of your opponents, by playing the Ace of trumps second hand high, **when** both you and your partner are trumping suits. Suppose that you have shown that you are out of Spades and your partner has shown that he is out of Diamonds. The opponent at your right leads a small trump. You hold the Ace and 2. Well, you throw the venerable rule, "second hand low," to the winds, and play your Ace. Then you lead a Diamond, which your partner trumps, returning you a Spade. You make your 2 of trumps—which you hardly would have done if you had played it "second hand low" on the first lead—and lead your partner another Diamond. You have now worked in your cross-fire in spite of the efforts of your opponents to bring in their suits, and, by the use of a little common sense, you have made at least two tricks that you would have lost by playing "second hand low."

28.—Don't forget that your play, second hand, on a trump lead is very different to your play on a plain suit lead. For instance, the Ace having been played, you should not put up your King on a small card led, **unless** you want to stop the lead, or unless third hand has played such a high card that you suspect him of holding the Queen alone. By holding up the King—which you cannot lose, anyway—you give your partner a chance to make his perhaps unguarded Queen, or possibly his Jack, for third hand, with Queen and 10 or 9, will probably read fourth hand as holding the King, and will try to save his Queen by playing his next highest card. Even with both King and Queen, it is **sometimes** well to play low, especially when third hand has shown weakness in trumps, or when you will be compelled to lead from an Ace, Queen suit if you take the trick.

29.—Don't fail to especially watch the cards played by third

hand, and to **compare them** with the cards remaining in your own hand. This will often give you the most valuable information and will save you many tricks. For instance: You play the Jack on a small card led, and third player puts on the 10. Now that in itself may not seem to mean so very much, but if you look in your hand and find the 9, or—to go a little deeper—if the fourth hand plays the 9, it means a great deal indeed. It means that third player has no more of that suit, and you must govern your play accordingly. Yet I have seen a player of many years' experience do this: he took the first trick with the Queen, playing second hand. Third hand played the 10. Then this second player led the Ace, and almost fell out of his chair with astonishment when third hand trumped it, although he held the **9 and Jack** in his own hand! And we see these things every day. Again, by watching the cards played by the third player, you will be prevented from putting up high cards uselessly. Suppose the third hand has put up the 10 on his partner's lead of a small card. Your partner takes the trick and changes the suit. Later on the former suit is led again. Why should you put up the Ace, if you have the 9, or even the seven, supposing the 8 and 9 to have fallen on the first trick? Oh, the player at second hand has something to do besides playing "second hand low"—if he wants to give at least a faint imitation of a man playing Whist. And yet it is all so very easy, if you will only **get in the habit** of noticing these things. First, an understanding of what you should do, and then a little effort and attention, and almost before you know it the difficulties will disappear and you will no longer make the blunders that are so exasperating to a good partner, while your enjoyment of the game will be increased a hundred fold.

### PLAYING THIRD HAND

30.—Don't finesse the 10, with 10, Queen, on your partner's lead, in a plain suit. In trumps, with the Queen and three guards, it sometimes wins.

31.—Don't finesse the Jack, with Jack, King, in plain suits, when playing third hand, unless fourth hand has shown, on a lead from his partner, that he has not the Queen. (See No. 3.)

32.—Don't neglect, in playing third hand, to bestow the same attention on the cards played by fourth hand that you observed,

when playing second hand, in regard to the cards played by third hand, and for the same reason.

33.—Don't forget that it may be well to finesse your Jack, with Jack, King, on your partner's **second** lead, the Ace having been played, **when** you see that you may need the King later on as a card of re-entry. Remember this.

34.—Don't hesitate to finesse the Queen, with Ace, Queen, on your partner's lead, **except** when you have a very long suit, and second hand has played a high card, indicating that he is likely to trump the second round. Then play your Ace.

35.—Don't, if you can well avoid it, return your partner's lead in a plain suit, when second hand has taken the first trick with the Queen or a low card, and has changed the suit. The strength doubtless lies with second hand, who is waiting to slaughter your partner on your lead. Fool him. This does not apply to your partner's lead of trumps, which should always be returned. (See exception, No. 64.)

#### PLAYING FOURTH HAND

36.—Don't forget that you can often give your partner the most valuable information by common-sense playing at fourth hand. (See Nos. 40, 44, 48, 55, 74, 78, 89, 107), and let them **sink in**.

37.—Don't fail to lead the best card in a suit when you have it and when you see that your partner has no more and is likely to trump the suit if it comes to him at second hand. Thus: Your opponents lead the Ace and King. On the second lead your partner drops the Queen. Your opponents then change the suit. You hold the Jack, but your partner, of course, does not know this, and may trump the suit if it is led, later on, at his right hand. You should lead your Jack at the very first opportunity, even before returning your partner's trump lead.

38.—Don't, when you hold a winning card, play a losing card on a trick that is against you, and then try to excuse yourself by saying, "I didn't notice what was played," or, "I thought it was your trick, partner." **There is absolutely no excuse for this blunder.** The three cards are in plain sight before your eyes, and you have the right to ask your partner to draw his card, if you are in doubt as to who has the trick as it lies. If you cannot take the trouble to be **sure** who has the high card on a trick, when it is up to you to take it or to give it away, you should never attempt to play cards. About once in a life-



time is often enough to commit this unpardonable offense, and yet we all know "players" who are guilty of it almost every time they sit down to play.

39.—Don't fail to watch carefully the cards played by your partner at second hand, for your position as last in play gives you opportunities for putting through winning plays that are afforded by no other position around the table. These are chiefly cases in which you can return your opponents' lead to advantage. Here is one instance: Player A leads a small card. Your partner, at second hand, plays low. Now, third hand, who is supposed to put up his highest card, produces only the 9, and you win the trick with the 10. Now do you see what a pretty play you have in returning your opponents' suit?—**provided** that you have not such overwhelming strength in it that you are justified in attempting to establish it by leading trumps. It is plain that the third player has no high cards in the suit, and if the King lies in the first player's hand, and the Ace in your partner's, which is quite likely, you have your opponents "in the hole,"—if you play your cards right. You should return the suit, leading, if possible, a card that is as good as the one put up by the third player on the first lead. If the original leader does not cover this, your partner will not, and you win the trick, while your partner's Ace is still held over the doomed King in the first player's hand. If you have no card high enough to "hold down" the third player, lead your highest anyway, as your partner may have the one that you lack. Now, if you do not take the lead here, as I have described, your partner may have to lead the suit, and he would have to lead the Ace, after which the King would make the third trick. Another one of the many opportunities for good play offered the fourth-hand player is when your partner has shown that he either has no more or that he has the best card in a suit led by your opponents. Thus, if he plays the King on an Ace led, or the Queen on a King led, you must conclude that he either has no more, or that he has the best card, and you must lead that suit to him as soon as possible, **provided** that he has not called for trumps, in which case this lead would be the very worst that you could make, for you will either force him to trump, or to put up a winning card that he may need later on as a card of re-entry.

## NOTE THIS FOURTH-HAND PLAY

40.—Don't forget this useful little stunt: Suppose you hold Queen, Jack and **one** small card, and Ace, Queen in one or more other suits, playing fourth hand. The Ace of your Queen, Jack suit is led. You should play your Queen. Funny play? Not at all. It's the only play. The leader will almost always become frightened, and change the suit, perhaps leading up to your Ace, Queen, in which case you will make two tricks—while you would probably make only one if the lead came from either of the other players. Again, your play of the Queen shows your partner that you do **not** hold the King, and so, if he has no more of that suit, he knows what to do on the second lead. And still again, it shows him that you have either the Jack or no more, and that he can depend upon you for the third trick, Ace and King being gone. And once more, if you play the small card first, **you cannot make both Jack and Queen, anyway**, for the King is sure to fall on the second trick, if the suit is led next. Now do you see why the Queen is the only common-sense play?

## LEADS IN GENERAL

41.—Don't lead from a Queen at the head of a suit if you can avoid it.

42.—Don't fail to lead, as soon as possible, a suit that an opponent is discarding, especially if it has not yet been led.

43.—Don't lead a suit that **both** of your opponents are out of. One will discard from another suit while the other trumps.

44.—Don't fail to lead the King as soon as possible, when you hold King and Queen only. Your partner may lead the Ace, and your two highest cards will fall together.

45.—Don't **ever** lead from a King and one small card if you can possibly avoid it, nor from a King and more than one small card, unless your only other lead is still worse.

46.—Don't lead a "thirteener" early in the hand, just because you happen to have it. Wait until later, when it may be worth several tricks to you by forcing out a menacing trump.

47.—Don't lead trumps in order to establish your strong suit when you find that your partner has none of that suit. It is better to let him discard from his weak suit on your high cards, and use his trumps on that, later on.

48.—Don't lead a small card, when obliged to open a suit headed by King, Queen. Lead the King. What is the sense of letting

fourth hand win the first trick with the Jack, and then losing your King to the Ace in second hand?

49.—Don't lead the King, in a plain suit, with King, Queen, Jack, 10. The 10 will pass the Ace in second hand, and your partner may trump the second round, while if your partner puts up the Ace, there is small chance of harm resulting.

50.—Don't lead trumps first, **early in the hand**, when you have a long and strong suit to establish, only moderate strength in trumps, **and no card of re-entry**. First lead the highest card of your strong suit, for the information of your partner, and then lead trumps.

51.—Don't fail to lead the twelfth plain suit card when it is evident that the thirteenth lies in fourth hand, **surely** when you have the best, and when you have the lower, **unless** your partner has shown that he does not want to trump in, or **unless** you have the best card in some suit that second hand is likely to discard from. Then lead that first.

52.—Don't forget that, when you lead out your Ace, King and Queen of trumps, for no reason, but just because you have them, it is **two chances to one** that you are establishing a suit for your opponents. That's plain, isn't it? You say, "I didn't want to trump in with my big trumps." Well, isn't it better to trump in with your Ace, King and Queen, and possibly let your partner trump in with his 2, 3 and 4—six tricks instead of three—than to blindly lead trumps with two chances to one against its being the best play?

53.—Don't lead the small one from Queen, Jack and a small one. Lead the Queen. If second hand covers, and your partner goes over with the Ace, your Jack is at once good for the second round, while if you had led the small one and called out your partner's Ace, your Queen or Jack dies in the second round.

54.—Don't lead Ace first (in plain suits) with Ace and one small card only. Lead the small card first. If the King lies in second player's hand he will not put it up, and your partner may win the trick with the Queen, leaving you with the Ace for the second trick. The King dies to your trump on third lead, whereas had you led the Ace first the King would have made.

55.—Don't lead the lowest of a sequence, or of two cards of equal value. For instance, Mr. Duffer, holding Queen, Jack and 10, leads the 10. His partner puts up the King, which is

promptly killed at fourth hand. Mr. Duffer is shocked. "Why, you didn't need to put up the King," he moans. "I had the Jack and Queen." For the love of Mike! yes; but how was his partner to know it?

56.—Don't forget that there are two exceptions to the foregoing rule. One of these is when the opponent at your left is cut of the suit, and you are not strong enough in trumps to establish it. If you lead the lowest, he may pass it, and you steal the trick. The other exception is when you hold King, Queen, Jack, 10, 9, etc., and want your partner's Ace out of the way of your suit when established, so that he will not be forced to take the lead away from you and ruin your play.

57.—Don't lead a small card "through" a face card turned up, if you are trying to have your partner kill the turned-up card. Thus, suppose that the King is turned to your left as trump, and your hand justifies a trump lead. Your partner may have the Ace, and it would be a fine thing if he could kill that King. Now if you hold the Queen, Jack and 10, or any of them, you should lead the highest. If these pass the King, your partner, supposing him to have the Ace, will also let them pass. But if you lead a small card—having these in your hand—your partner will consider it necessary to play the Ace and return the lead—when you will lose your highest trump, anyway—as he will think that you want trumps out at any cost, which he should not think if you lead a high card with the evident intention of forcing up the King.

58.—Don't lead from a suit containing Ace and Queen, without the King, if you can possibly avoid it. This is about the very worst lead that can be made in Whist, and it is simply astonishing to see how many people—I cannot say players—are guilty of making it. It is plain to be seen that if you lead the Ace, whoever holds the King wins the second trick, and your Queen is likely be trumped on the third lead. On the other hand, if the play comes to you, fourth hand, you are sure of winning the first two tricks. Besides, you have a good chance to kill your opponents' King. If the suit comes to you from your partner you will finesse the Queen, with a good chance to of making two tricks. If it comes to you from your right hand opponent you will also play the Queen, with the same prospect. So the imbecility of leading from the combination of Ace, Queen is perfectly evident.



## ABOUT THE "SNEAK" LEAD

59.—Don't let it forever fail to permeate your inner consciousness that the perennial "sneak lead" is a big loser in the long run. I know that it is an impossibility to convince the chronic sneak leader of this fact, but the less hardened should be somewhat amenable to reason. In the first place, when you lead your little sneak, you require your partner to put up his best card. If that happens to be the King, and he gets it killed, you have lost a trick, because he would almost certainly have made his King on the second round. Again, if your partner, with Ace, Queen, finesses and loses his Queen, you have lost a trick, probably, for he would very likely have made both Ace and Queen, besides, seeing you refuse on the second lead, he would have given you a third lead to trump. And again, the suit would probably have been led, you would have seen something of your partner's strength in it, and might have been able to shorten up in some other suit, saving your trumps for good use later on. Of course, there are instances where the lead from a sneak, or singleton, as is its more dignified title, is perfectly justifiable, and is good Whist. One of these is when, toward the close of the hand, you have nothing else to lead but a suit that will bring you certain disaster. Another is when you find yourself with one or two little trumps, no leading cards whatever, and a singleton—a kind of hand indicating that someone has a long, strong suit and will lead trumps at the first opportunity.

## RETURNING YOUR PARTNER'S LEAD

60.—Don't take too much stock in that ancient fable about **always** returning your partner's lead. It is **sometimes** nothing short of idiocy to do so.

61.—Don't fail, however, to return your partner's lead unless you have a very good reason for not returning it, and are sure that you are justified in your action.

62.—Don't return his lead when, for instance, he has led an Ace and one of your opponents has played the Queen to it, or the King, and you hold the Queen yourself.

63.—Don't return his lead when it is plain by the fall of the play that he must lose a high card to the opponent behind him, which he might save if that opponent leads up to him.

64.—Don't forget there are only two valid excuses (and one

exception) for not returning your partner's lead of trumps. One of these is sudden death and the other is that you have no trump to return. Of course this will not apply to a good player who may refuse, with good reason, to return the blind, senseless trump lead of a duffer, but you should be **sure** that your partner doesn't know what he is doing, before you refuse to return this most important of all leads. Now the only exception to this rule—and even this is not admitted by some players—is in a case like the following: The King has been turned as trump by the opponent at your right. Your partner leads the Jack or 10 **through** the King. The King keeps off. You, holding the Ace, also keep off. Fourth hand wins the trick and leads a plain suit. Now you, on getting the lead, should not return trumps, but should endeavor to put your partner in the lead, as it is most plainly his desire to force the King up against your Ace, and he will probably next lead a high card that will either force the King or win, leaving your Ace still in control.

#### RETURNING YOUR OPPONENTS' LEAD

65.—Don't fall a victim to the superstition that you must never return your opponents' lead. It is often the very best thing that you can do.

66.—Don't hesitate to return your opponents' lead when it is evident that your partner can take the trick. Capture it before it has a chance to get away.

67.—Don't hesitate to return your opponents' lead when it is evident that your partner is out of that suit. If he refuses to trump, it gives you the advantage of knowing that he wants a trump lead.

68.—Don't hesitate to return your opponents' lead, **on the third round**, when the location of the winning card is doubtful, and you have a poor hand to lead from, and might put your partner in jeopardy by opening a new suit.

#### CONCERNING DISCARDS

69.—Don't keep a "thirteener," or the last cards of any suit, when you see that you cannot hope to get the lead.

70.—Don't discard the last cards out in any suit, if there is any possibility of getting the lead. They may be useful in forcing out adverse trumps, or they may be made good by the development of unexpected trump strength in your partner's hand.

71.—Don't forget that your first discard—if you have a part-

ner who knows anything about the game—is as important as your first lead.

72.—Don't discard so as to leave a King without a guard when the Ace has not been played, or a Queen without two guards, with both Ace and King out against it, or with one guard with either one of these out against it.

73.—Don't discard a "thirteener" when you have the slightest chance of getting in the lead, if you have any losing card to discard. A "thirteener" may be of the greatest value: first, when the trumps are all out, when it is as good as the Ace of trumps; second, when it is evident that your partner has just one card left in a losing suit, and you want to give him a chance to discard it; third, when you want to force a trump out of your opponents, without using one yourself.

74.—Don't commit the error, so common with some players, of attempting to inform your partner as to the suit you want him to lead, by discarding a card of that suit. The proper discard (with two exceptions) is always from your **weakest** suit, and you will simply deceive your partner—if he happens to be a player who knows anything about the game—by discarding from your best suit, for he will lead you anything but the suit you are discarding, **unless** he thinks that you have got rid of your last card in that suit, and are prepared to trump it. Besides, can't you see that your discard from your weakest suit gives your partner almost the same information as you could impart by actually discarding from the suit that you wish him to lead? He certainly knows how you stand regarding two of the four suits—the one that is being led and the one that you are discarding from. It must, then, be one of the two remaining suits that you wish him to lead, and he will usually know, from the previous fall of the cards or from the contents of his own hand, which of these two suits to lead. The two exceptions in which you **do not** discard from your weakest are: first, when your right hand opponent is trumping a certain suit, and you have a chance to get rid of your cards in that suit—even though they be the best out—in order to trump over him; second, when you hold a top sequence—Ace, King, Queen, Jack, etc.—and there is urgent necessity that this suit be led; then you should discard the Ace, or whatever happens to be the highest card out, and your partner cannot fail to give you your lead.

## WHEN YOU DON'T TRUMP IN

75.—Don't throw away half a dozen tricks for the sake of taking **one** trick, by wasting a trump when you have a fine long suit and may need every trump in order to make it good. For example, suppose you have a hand something like this:

Hearts—Ace, King, Queen, 2.

Clubs—4, 3.

Spades—Ace, King, Queen, 10, 9, 7, 6.

Hearts are trump. Now suppose one of your opponents opens the play by leading the Ace of Diamonds. You have no Diamonds. What are you going to do about it? Your first impulse, no doubt, would be to trump it with the 2 of Hearts. Well, that would be about the most idiotic thing you could do. You have seven Spades, which are surely good for seven tricks, IF the Jack falls by the third lead, and IF you can get all of the trumps out, or IF you can get them all out but one—which you can force out with your Spades—and IF you can get back into your Spades again after losing the lead to that last trump. I once saw this hand played in this manner: Player A led the Ace of Diamonds. Player B trumped it with the 2 of trumps and led Ace, King and Queen of trumps. He then opened his Spade suit with the Ace. Player C trumped this with the last trump, and led a Diamond, which Player D (B's partner) took with the King. D led a Club, which was taken by A, who then went down the line with his Diamonds and Clubs, making eight tricks altogether. Just as a "post mortem," the hands were picked up again, and Player B played correctly, with the following result: he discarded the 4 of Clubs on the Ace of Diamonds led, and the 3 of Clubs on the second lead of Diamonds. This trick was taken with the King by D, who led a trump. B played his three high trumps, and led the Ace of Spades. This was trumped, as before, by C, who led a Diamond. And here is where B's common-sense playing reaped its reward. Not having weakened his hand by trumping that Ace of Diamonds, he still had the 2 of trumps left—AND HE NEEDED IT! Besides, he had got rid of his two worthless little Clubs. He trumped the Diamond and went down the line with his six remaining Spades, making a total of eleven tricks, as against five that he made when he trumped the Ace of Diamonds instead of discarding a worthless Club and saving his fourth trump as a



re-entry for his long Spade suit. And it wasn't "scientific" Whist that made this difference of six tricks in one hand. It was just plain, ordinary, every-day common sense!

#### FORCING YOUR OPPONENT TO TRUMP

76.—Don't fail to force an opponent who has refused to trump a trick that was against him. Common sense must show you that the player in such a case has a strong plain suit, and that he is only waiting to get a chance to lead the trumps out and bring in his suit, but that he has no trumps to spare. Hence the worst injury you can do him is to force him to use one or two of his trumps without drawing any of yours. To be sure, you must sacrifice one or two high suit cards, but you will block his game and prevent him from making two or three times as many tricks in his own suit. But here is the way some "players" handle the case: Smith leads the Ace of Spades. Jones, next in play, has no Spades, but does not trump the Ace, discarding a small suit card instead, and the Ace wins. Smith hugs himself all over at getting his Ace home. "Aha!" he says, "got no Spades, eh? Well, I'll fix you," and he leads out trumps—Ace, King, Queen, Jack. Poor Smith! Why, bless his fool heart, that is just what Jones wanted—as the unfortunate Smith discovers later. Smith then leads another Spade. Jones takes it with the last trump out and then goes down the line with six or seven tricks in Diamonds.

#### DON'T PLAY AGAINST YOUR PARTNER

77.—Don't try to force your partner to trump in after he has shown that he does not want to do so. **LET THIS SINK IN!** For instance, one of your opponents leads the Ace of Diamonds. Your partner has no Diamonds, yet he does not trump the Ace. Later on you get the lead and lead a small Diamond. Well, you have committed an act of stupidity that is about as near being criminal as anything can be in a card game—yet we see this done with a frequency that is heart-breaking to those who try to find enjoyment, not exasperation, in the game. Now It should be perfectly plain to you that when your partner refused to trump that ace, he did so for a reason—if we may assume that he has as much sense as a breakfast food—and that reason must have been, first: the fact that he had a long suit that would yield several tricks if he could get the trumps out and bring it in; second: that he had no trumps to spare—that he could not afford to run the risk of losing perhaps **four or five**

tricks by weakening his trump suit for the sake of taking **one** trick. Your imperative duty, then, on securing the lead, was to lead a trump—the highest you had. If you try to force him to trump in, you are simply joining forces with the enemy and compelling your partner to battle against three opponents instead of two. **Paste this in your hat!**

### GIVING YOUR PARTNER INFORMATION

.78.—Don't fail to give your partner all the information possible regarding the cards you have in your hand. This can often be done very easily by playing your cards properly. Here is one instance: Suppose that you hold the Jack, 10 and 9 of a suit, and the Ace is led. You should play the Jack, and on the second lead you should play the 9. Now, unless your partner is an inmate of the Home for the Feeble-Minded Blind, he cannot fail to know that you still hold the 10. If you play these cards in any other manner, you convey no information whatever. Of what use is this information? you ask. Well, it may be of all kinds of use. In the first place, it tells your partner that he must not lead you that suit with the expectation that you will trump it. Again, it puts him out of all doubt in case the suit is led again at his right hand, and he has no more. If you had played your first two cards in any other manner, he would be in total darkness as to whether he should trump the trick or not. Now, however, he knows exactly what to do. If the Ace and King, but not the Queen, have fallen, he knows that he must trump the trick to win it, for if you had held the Queen you would have played it instead of the Jack. On the other hand, if the Ace, King and Queen have fallen, he knows that he can get rid of a worthless card on the trick with perfect safety, for he knows that you have the 10, which is the best card out. Now do you see what advantage there is in playing your cards in a common-sense manner instead of playing them like a man shoveling coal? Of course this plan should be applied to all sequences, whether of three, four or five cards. Thus, with 10, 9, 8, 7 and 6, you play first the 10, and then the 6, showing your partner three cards that you have in your hand, as plainly as if you spread them out on the table. There are many such information-giving plays, but I will cite just one more. Suppose that you hold Ace, King, Queen and Jack of a suit. The suit is led to you, playing fourth hand. Now, if for any reason you

dare not attempt to establish this suit by leading trumps, you may take the trick with the Ace, and lead back the Jack. If it is trumped, your partner will know that you still hold the King and Queen, and, if strong in trumps, he should try to establish them for you. Had you taken the first trick with the Jack, and then led the Ace, he would be in the dark as to the whereabouts of the King and Queen. Remember that you can never know anything of the real enjoyment of the game, nor will you be anything but a nuisance and a source of exasperation to a good partner, until you have learned such simple rudimentary points as these, and which require such a very small amount of time and attention in order to master them.

### MISCELLANEOUS "DON'TS"

79.—Don't think that there are no exceptions to **every** rule.

80.—Don't try to be a good player and a "speedy" one at the same time.

81.—Don't forget that you can safely finesse much more deeply in trumps than in plain suits.

82.—Don't fail to exact a penalty, and don't wait to be reminded of it, when you owe a penalty.

83.—Don't think that "an Ace is only good for one trick." It may be good for much more, handled with judgment.

84.—Don't become disgusted and discouraged when you pick up an unusually poor hand. Other people have the same kind of luck, too.

85.—Don't think that mistakes are never made by even the best players. The always-perfect Whist player has not yet been evolved.

86.—Don't think that failing to sort and count your cards is any excuse for making a renege and spoiling the hand for the three other players.

87.—Don't forget that an Ace led may catch only the 2, 3 and 4, while an Ace **played fourth hand** will kill one of your opponent's highest cards.

88.—Don't forget that the 2, 3 and 4 of a plain suit will be just as good as the Ace, King and Queen of trump, when they are the only cards of that suit left, and when the trumps are out.

89.—Don't play **the card that you have turned as trump**, as long as you can just as well play another one. Thus, if you have turned the 8, and hold the 7, 9 and 10, you should play these first.

And which of these first? The 10, of course, showing your partner that you still hold the 9 and 8.

90.—Don't think that someone isn't sure to see you when you try to "rubber" at an opponent's hand. And—well, what do **you** think of the sneak who tries to look into **your** hand?

91.—Don't think that a "sneak" lead is **never** justifiable. The lead of a singleton is perfectly legitimate, and, in cases where any other lead is sure to result in disaster, the "sneak" should be led without hesitation.

92.—Don't forget that it requires brains, observation, humility, patience, and a willingness to learn—especially the latter—to become a good Whist player. "A wise man can learn from a fool, but a fool from a wise man, never."

93.—Don't think that the rankest kind of bad play doesn't sometimes win tricks, and that the finest kind of good play doesn't sometimes lose them. These cases, however, are merely phenomena, and do not affect final results.

94.—Don't think that merely playing at Whist for a great many years makes a good player. "Years make old men, not sages." Some of the biggest duffers in the game are people who have played from twenty to fifty years.

95.—Don't forget that a poor hand requires greater skill and more brains to play than a good one. Study your poor hand carefully, watch the fall of the cards, and by skillful management you may do far better than you expected to.

96.—Don't laugh at people who play Whist "by the book." That is, unless it is your custom also to laugh at people who play the piano, violin and other instruments by note, or who design buildings and construct railroads "by the books."

97.—Don't let it escape your notice that the finesse is the greatest trick-gaining (or trick-stealing) device in Whist, and don't be afraid to resort to it—at least the Ace, Queen finesse—whenever you have the fortunate opportunity to do so.

98.—Don't "swear off" finessing because you have just had your Queen killed by the King in fourth hand, and then had your Ace trumped on the second round. You might as well swear off breathing because you have just inhaled a mosquito.

99.—Don't try to play your thirteen cards against the thirty-nine others. You have a partner. (This does not apply when your partner happens to be a duffer. In that case you will be



obliged to play against the thirty-nine other cards, whether you want to or not.)

100.—Don't fail to trump a "thirteener," second or third hand, toward the end of the hand, when you hold a trump that you cannot possibly make, anyway. You may thus do much good by forcing a high trump from one of your opponents, while otherwise he would have taken the trick with a small trump, and used the high one to damage your partner with.

101.—Don't "get mad" and play recklessly or purposely wrong, just because your partner has made a mistake—or you think that he has. Even if your score is hopeless, you have no right to injure your partner's score. This doesn't buy you anything. Besides, his bad play may have been the result of one those oversights that occasionally happen to the very best players.

102.—Don't forget that, with an utterly useless trump, it is often good play to trump a trick, even when you know that your partner, at fourth hand, has the best card. You get in your otherwise worthless trump, and leave your partner still in control of the suit. This is especially correct play, first, when you want the lead; second, when it will be a disadvantage for your partner to have the lead; third, when your opponents are trying to force out the high cards in that suit. Otherwise, otherwise.

103.—Don't forget that giving up without doing your best doesn't buy you anything. Two toads fell into a pail half full of milk. "I'm a goner!" yelled one toad, and sank at once to the bottom and was drowned. "Well, I'll kick as long as I'm alive," said the other toad. So he kicked and kicked and kicked until he found to his surprise that he had churned a big lump of butter. So he climbed up on the butter and hopped out of the pail. (Of course this happened before toads learned to swim.)

104.—Don't try to excuse an inexcusably bad play. You only invite the suspicion that you are either very ignorant or very stupid when you attempt to explain away a palpable blunder, while a frank admission that you played like a chump will effectually clear the atmosphere and disarm all further criticism. Besides, it will keep you in the good estimation of your fellow players, which the other course will not, for there is hardly any object of greater derision than the fool who doesn't know that he is a fool.

105.—Don't think that it shows you to be a person of vast superiority or importance when you sneeringly remark: "Oh, I don't pretend to be a Whist sharp; I have too many other things to think of." Well, Presidents, Kings and Emperors, and many of the world's greatest thinkers, have found the keenest intellectual enjoyment in becoming "Whist sharps," and in learning to play the game well. If Whist is below you, for heaven's sake don't make a monkey of yourself by sitting down and botching up the game for others. Leave it alone.

106.—Don't fail to **count the cards as they fall, and note their size**, when a suit is led in which you hold a large number of small ones. Then you will know when your small ones have become the best. Of course a **real** player keeps track of **every** suit, and even a beginner should be able to keep track of at least **one** suit beside the trump. (You cannot pretend to be playing Whist **at all** if you are not keeping track of the trumps. It is certainly not such a difficult matter—for a person who is not an idiot—to count as high as thirteen.)

107.—Don't expect your partner to have the Queen, if he has led the Ace but has not held the King. Thus: Your partner leads the Ace. Then he leads a small one. This trick is taken with the King by the second in play, who then, or later on, returns a small card of the same suit. You have no more, and you are in doubt whether to trump the trick or not, as you don't know who holds the Queen. Well, you shouldn't have any doubt at all. Your partner does not hold the Queen, for, with anything else to lead, he would not have led an Ace, Queen suit—unless he happens to be a rank duffer. See?

108.—Don't forget that inattention to the game is absolutely unpardonable. "Oh, I was thinking of something else," or, "I didn't notice what was played," really mean, "I should have stayed at home instead of coming here to make a nuisance of myself." If you were in partnership in business you would not think of ruining the interests of both your partner and yourself by failing to do your duty. Well, Whist is a business—even though it be only a business of intellectual enjoyment—and you have no right to wilfully or carelessly ruin your partner's business—which in this case is his enjoyment.

109.—Don't lubricate your thumb by inserting it in your mouth while dealing the cards. If your thumb is too smooth, you

might tie a piece of sandpaper around it, or you might take the cards off of the deck by deftly jabbing them with a jackknife. It is no longer considered the acme of good form to spit on your thumb just previous to handing a card or any other article to your neighbor. Indeed, it is related that a certain finicky young man, seeing the dealer insert a not overly clean thumb in a not overly clean mouth, drew a pair of gloves from his pocket and incased his hands in them before touching his cards.

110.—Don't play even **one** card, when picking up your hand after the deal, until you have sorted your hand and examined carefully the cards in each suit. You have seen the ninny who "plays Whist" something after this fashion: Being first in play, he begins picking up his cards one by one. When has picked up about the third card an angelic smile spreads over his features. "Ah! here's an Ace! That's good enough for me!" And down on the table goes the Ace. He scoops in his trick triumphantly, and picks up a few more cards. "Hello, here's another Ace. That's what I call some luck! Let's see how this one'll go." And that Ace follows the same course. If he chances to pick up the four Aces, he plays them all in the same blind, senseless way. Then he leans back in his chair complacently. "Well, partner, I've done my share; now let's see what you can do." It matters not to him that one or more of these Aces may have been accompanied by a Queen, which would have given him two sure tricks in that suit—playing fourth hand—or two probable tricks, playing second or third hand. It matters not to him that one or two of these Aces was sorely needed later in the hand, to change a suit lead, to knock out an almost-established suit of his opponents, or to bring in an established suit of his own or of his partner's. No, it matters not at all to him that his fool play may have cost him five or six tricks. He has "done his share," and it is now "up to his partner to do the rest." It may be added that these remarks apply with equal force to the player who plays his Aces in the same manner, **after** he has looked at his hand.

111.—Don't perform the idiotic stunt of refusing to put up the King on your partner's lead of a small card, for fear that you will "get it killed." This is one of the most exasperating idiosyncrasies of many beginners,—and of some older players as well. Here is about the way these geniuses work their wonders: You, holding Ace, six and seven, lead the seven. Second player puts

on the nine. Your partner, holding King and eight, plays the eight. Then he turns to fourth player with a knowing smile, which says, "Aha! You didn't get my King **that** time—I'm too smart for **that**!" When you get the lead again you lead, of course, the Ace, and your partner's King falls to it. Or, possibly, you may have been forced to lead two small ones from the Queen. Your partner, with King and two small ones, lets your opponents take the first two tricks with ten, Jack, and then second player leads his Ace and slaughters your Queen and your partner's King at one shot. In vain you afterward try to explain to him that he could hardly expect to win a trick by playing an eight on second player's nine; in vain you try to explain that even the sacrifice of his priceless King would have made your Queen good on the second round. There's nothing to it. He informs you that the Ace **might** have been in fourth hand. "I did my best to save my King, but luck was against me, that's all." That is his ultimatum, and you can suit yourself about it. It seems absurd to devote space to such a simple proposition as this, but every experienced whist player knows how often he has been made the victim of this especial form of idiocy.

#### "DON'TS" CONCERNING DEMEANOR

112.—Don't forget that silence is a requisite of good Whist.

113.—Don't lose your temper—unless you enjoy having people laugh at you.

114.—Don't roar at your partner every time he makes a mistake—unless you have never made a mistake yourself.

115.—Don't forget that the gray-headed excuse, "Oh, I didn't know I had that card," is twin brother to "I didn't know it was loaded." Both are dead ones.

116.—Don't display impatience at a slow player. Whist is a game for the exercise of brains, judgment and reflection, not a game of impulse and guesswork. If you want to play a swift game you should shake dice—one dice, one flop.

117.—Don't commit the inexcusable offense of telling what kind of a hand you have before the play begins or while it is in progress. Nothing could be more unfair, and, besides, it is not Whist at all. You simply spoil the game for the other players.

118.—Don't be one of those remarkable people who think that **they** are the only ones who should be expected to win—that everyone else should be perfectly satisfied with 2's, 1's and



goose eggs, but that it is a crime if **they** don't score from 7 to 13 every hand. These big **l** and little **u** people should stay home.

119.—Don't dream that you can ever become a **really good** player of ordinary Whist until you have read **and studied** some good book on the genuine game. You may think so now, but—well, the Eskimo has grave doubts about there being any sky-scrapers, but when he gets to New York he changes his mind.

120.—Don't act as if a crime had been committed every time that you fail to make the odd—or three or four of them. It is barely possible that there are other players who also like to make the odd trick occasionally, and who—unreasonable as it may seem to you—may really be entitled to it, once in a great while.

121.—Don't weep aloud over your "bad luck" unless you are absolutely sure that it is not your miserably bad playing that is to blame. I have seen a player have a cursing fit over the "hard luck" that kept him at the same table for seven consecutive hands, when—having watched his play—I knew that he had lost the odd **every hand**, by his own bad playing!

122.—Don't object to "post mortems," when conducted in a friendly, courteous manner—unless you happen to be either a player of absolute perfection or a congenital idiot. It is by talking over by-gone plays and noting past errors that we improve our play, and it is the best players who are most ready to discuss their own errors. It is the duffer who is eternally snarling, "Oh, that was last summer."

123.—Don't look at the bottom card, when dealing. That isn't Whist. In fact, according to the rules, a new deal must be had if the trump is exposed before the deal is completed. Of course, if you care nothing whatever for the rules, that is a different matter. In that case you might as well make your own rules altogether, and, while you are about it, make them to suit the exigencies of whatever kind of a hand you may happen to hold at the time. Thus, if you hold a hand chiefly composed of low cards, you might change the rule so that Deuces will take Aces and Trays will take Kings. That would be just as sensible as it is to cast to the winds the other rules that have been agreed upon by the generations of players who have made Whist the splendid game that it is when properly played.

124.—Don't slam your card down, when playing to a trick, as if

you were trying to swat a fly or hammer a horse-shoe—that is, don't perform this boorish stunt unless it is your custom, when at the dinner table, to grab your grub with both hands and scoop it down your throat hog-fashion. In that case, of course, it is to be expected that you will also act like a hog at the Whist table. Annie Blanche Selby well says: "The Whist table is the crucible which reveals one's disposition in its true and unvarnished light, and seldom, if ever, is the impression formed of one by some lapse or breach of good manners there entirely eradicated or overcome." If these slam-bangers of cards could only realize the fact that they are advertising themselves as being persons of the rankest ill-breeding—it matters not how many diamonds or what fine clothes they may wear—there might possibly be a little less of this Johnnie Backwoods hammering, but I doubt it. It's hard to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

125.—Don't, when your partner, playing second hand, trumps a suit in which you, at fourth hand, hold the best card, commit the inexcusable offense of showing by your actions that you hold the best card. We all know the detestable player who does this. He has a variety of what he considers cute little ways of accomplishing his dishonesty, all of which, however, are so transparent as to excite only the derision and disgust of honorable players. Sometimes he merely rolls up his eyes, emits a mournful sigh, and plays to the trick with the resigned air of one who, having lost all that is worth living for on earth, is prepared to face the terrors of death, unafraid. Again, he will transfix his partner with baleful eye, grit his teeth, and finally fling a card viciously on the table. Sometimes he is even more audacious in his rascality. Seeing his partner hesitate, considering whether to trump or not, he will take his winning card out of his hand, and hold it ready poised to play! Well, we all know him, and we all despise him. Let him be somebody else—not you.

Finally, don't think that merely **reading** this book will be of any particular benefit to you. But if you will take the trouble to pick out and place before you, in supposititious hands, the various combinations of cards referred to, and make yourself see **WHY** you should play as I have indicated, these suggestions should enable you to play a fine game of Whist party Whist.

the comfort and enjoyment of others than does the raw beginner who sits down to a game of Whist—doubtless with the best of intentions—and spoils the pleasure of his neighbors.

You will perhaps say, "Gracious! What a fuss over nothing! Of what importance is a game of Whist, anyhow? It surely isn't a matter of life or death." True enough. And, along the same lines, of what importance is a fishing trip or a visit to the skating rink? They surely are not matters of life or death. Yet, when you go fishing, do you bait your hook with a chunk of wood and then cast your line up in a tree? Or, when you go to the skating rink, do you attempt to skate without first attaching yourself to a pair of skates? No matter how trivial in importance may be the thing that we are doing, it would seem that little can be gained by making an utter mess of it.

Many writers treat the "amusement" player with almost brutal severity, terming him a boor, a "jay," and some other things, and several small oceans of superheated ink have been shed on the subject. For my part, I realize the ameliorating fact that the first offense (I am not quite so sure about subsequent ones) may be the result of perfectly excusable ignorance. I recall the case of a well-bred, refined lady who was persuaded by an "amusement"-playing friend to attend a Whist party for the first time, being assured that "Whist is the easiest thing in the world; all you have to do is to follow suit or trump." The lady attended the party and faithfully followed her brief instructions, but her debut as a Whist player failed to call forth any wreaths of glory. She trumped her partner's Ace, King and Queen of Diamonds, played the seven on her partner's lead of a small trump, holding the Ace in her hand, and twice led suits that her opponents were trumping. On the following day, when a sensible friend kindly but firmly explained the situation to her, the lady burst into tears of bitter mortification. Speedily recovering, however, she set out to interview her "amusement"-playing friend. Just what took place at that interview I don't know, but I do know that a book store close by sold two books on Whist that same day, and that for several weeks two certain ladies were not visible at any public Whist party. To-day these two ladies are among the very best players that I know.

Remember this: The only real "amusement" you can get out of Whist lies in **playing Whist**—not in preventing three other persons from doing so!



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